



Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District's Conservation Corner

Highlighting the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District's projects, programs, and events. September 2011

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Working to manage and promote the wise use of natural resources in Hamilton County since 1965

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Students Clue into Conservation

In its 32nd year, the District's Conservation Field Day continues to teach students about the importance of environmental conservation. Ninety-eight 5th and 6th graders arrived at the office on September 22 armed with notebooks and ready to hike the Nature Trail to 6 presentation stations.

Students discovered that fish have specific habitat and dietary adaptations at the **Fish Morphology** station with Beth Gilles (Lake Champlain - Lake George Regional Planning Board). Joe San Antonio and Allison Braunius (Trail Blazers) described the habitat, diet, and ecological importance of black, brown, and polar bears at the **What Bear Goes Where** station. An electric meter showed the differences in temperature and energy consumption between incandescent and CFL bulbs at the **Light Bulb Comparison** station with Nancy Welch

(Cornell Cooperative Extension). John Seifts (Department of Environmental

"These students are the future stewards of our Earth."

Conservation's retired Forest Ranger) showed students how to identify common Adirondack trees and discussed their values at the **Tree Identification** station. At the **Conservation Construction** station, Tom Bielli (Natural Resources Conservation Service) illustrated how soil erosion can be reduced in forestry, agricultural, and urban practices with a 3D watershed model. Students learned about the hydrologic cycle with Caitlin Stewart (the District) at the **Follow That Drop** station,

understanding that even though water is a renewable resource, not all people have access to safe drinking water. Dean Davis of the Living World Ecology Center showed off his amazing reptiles during the final presentation.

"These students are the future stewards of our Earth," said Stewart. "Conservation Field Day not only offers our students a day of learning outside, but stepping stones for adult careers in conservation, knowledge to make wise decisions regarding natural resources, and practical life skills."

Students may enter the essay or poster contests describing what they learned.



John Seifts puts students' tree identification skills to the test.

10 things YOU can do to Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle

Conservation saves money, greens the environment, and ensures that our children will have access to natural resources.

1. **Reduce by using fewer resources.** Purchase items that are useful and durable. If an item is beautiful and well made, it will please you for a long time, and money and resources will not be spent on replacing the item.
2. **Turn water off** while brushing your teeth and save 5 gallons a day.



3. Purchase goods made from **post-consumer recycled materials.**

4. **Replace disposables** with reusable cloth napkins, dishes, plastic food storage containers, batteries, and coffee filters.
5. **Clean green** by replacing expensive household products with homemade remedies. Clean bathroom grime and kitchen counters with baking soda or kosher salt. Conquer grease, mildew, and stains with lemon juice or vinegar.
6. **Buy reusable** grocery bags, water bottles and to-go mugs. Say no to bottled water and throw-away coffee cups.
7. **Buy used goods** from thrift shops, consignment stores, or garage sales.
8. **Reuse** jam jars to store leftovers; food scraps as compost; an old shirt as PJs;

or an opened envelop as a shopping list. Share magazines, trade DVDs, return bottles, or donate cell phones.



9. **Donate** clothes, old furniture, or household appliance to charity organizations.
10. **Recycle.** Hamilton County transfer stations accept glass, #1 and #2 plastics, metal food and beverage containers, newspaper, white non-glossy paper, and corrugated cardboard. Learn what the recycling rules are in your community. If the wrong number plastic is melted in a batch, the whole load must be trashed.

View our Elbow Creek Restoration video at www.youtube.com/user/HamiltonCoSWCD

Soil Erosion: why it's bad and how to prevent it

Erosion occurs when surface soil is removed by wind or water due to steep slopes, a lack of vegetation, or drought. These deposits degrade water quality, fill in fish habitat, clog drainage channels, and pile on roadways. Public safety and health are threatened, and valuable soil nutrients are lost to soil erosion. Although these processes are natural, they are accelerated by human practices.

Signs of erosion:

1. Exposed roots and rocks
2. Gullies
3. Visible soil splashes on your home

4. Sediment deposits
5. Deepened river channels
6. Murky water

How to prevent erosion:

1. Plant vegetation. Plants provide a shield to the soil against wind, rain, and snow melt while roots hold soil in place. Native trees and shrubs will take well to our Adirondack climate and provide food and habitat for wildlife.
2. Mulch with wood chips, leaves, or needles. Water penetration will increase instead of flowing over the surface of the soil.

3. Rich soils act as glue, holding soil in place. Increase soil richness by adding compost, leaving grass clippings on the lawn, and tilling leaves.

Contact the District for more information.

